

REMARKS

The above-referenced application has been reviewed in light of the Examiner's Office Action dated January 21, 2005. Claims 1 and 11 have been canceled, and Claims 2-4, 6, 9-10, 12-18 and 21 have been amended. Therefore, Claims 2-10 and 12-21 are currently pending in this application. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In accordance with the Office Action, Claim 17 drew an objection for informalities. Claim 17 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's kind suggestion.


In accordance with the Office Action, Claims 1-3, 9-16 and 21 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,593,871 to Miethig et al. Claims 1 and 11 have been canceled, while Claims 2-3, 9-10, 12-16 and 21 have been amended to depend from allowable base claims.

In accordance with the Office Action, Claims 4-8 and 17-20 drew objections for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged. Accordingly, Claims 4, 6, 17 and 18 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the respective base claims.

Conclusion

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claims 4, 6, 17 and 18 are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated above. Since Claims 2-3, 5, 7-10, 12-16 and 19-21 each depend from one of the above claims and necessarily include each of the elements and limitations thereof, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for allowance for at least the reasons stated, and for reciting additional patentable subject matter. Thus, each of Claims 2-10 and 12-21 is in condition for allowance. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, reconsideration of the rejections and an early and favorable allowance of this case is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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